

Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Planning and Research
PO Box 3044
1400 Tenth Street, Rm 2
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: Department of Fish and Wildlife
Marine Region
1933 Cliff Drive, Suite 9
Santa Barbara, CA 93109

Project Title: Ocean Observing and Research: Northern California

Project Location: Nearshore and offshore waters of Humboldt County

Project Description: The Department of Fish and Wildlife is issuing a permit to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) – Southwest Fisheries Science Center (SWFSC) pursuant to Fish and Game Code Section 2081(a) for educational purposes. The Section 2081(a) permit authorizes the applicant to take longfin smelt (*Spirinchus thaleichthys*) during the course of sampling, subject to terms and conditions set forth in the permit. The purpose of this sampling is for the NOAA SWFSC's Ocean Observing and Research: Northern California study. The Section 2081(a) permit authorizes the applicant to potentially capture larval longfin smelt during surveys. The applicant will conduct year-round monthly sampling to collect oceanographic data and plankton samples as the basis for assessing the state of the ecosystem in coastal waters off Northern California through the use of plankton nets and larval pumps through December 31, 2027.

California Public Agency Approving Project: California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Dr. Eric Bjorkstedt, NOAA SWFSC


Exempt Status:

- Ministerial;
- Declared Emergency;
- Emergency Project;
- Categorical Exemption. Type and section number: Calif. Code Regs., § 15306, Information Collection, Class 6

Reasons why project is exempt: The Project involves research sampling within nearshore and offshore waters of Humboldt County which will not result in a serious or major disturbance to longfin smelt which are all listed under the California Endangered Species Act.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Dylan Inskeep

Telephone: (707) 317-3924

Signature:  _____ **Date:** 6/25/2024
Craig Shuman, Regional Manager, Marine Region

Signed by Lead Agency

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____